## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA CHARLOTTE DIVISION

SOMERO ENTERPRISES, INC.,

**Plaintiff** 

Civil Action No. 3:23-cv-245

v.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

TWINTEC USA, INC. and TOPP & SCREED S.A.,

Defendants.

## COMPLAINT FOR PATENT INFRINGEMENT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff Somero Enterprises, Inc. ("Somero") alleges as follows:

#### **Nature and Basis of Action**

1. This is an action for patent infringement arising under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35, United States Code. Somero seeks a determination that Twintec USA, Inc. ("Twintec USA") and Topp & Screed S.A. ("Topp & Screed") (collectively, "Defendants") have infringed U.S. Patent No. 8,038,366 (the "366 Patent") and that Somero be awarded the remedies as prayed herein.

#### The Parties

- 2. Somero is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of Delaware. Somero's principal office is located in Ft. Myers, Florida and its design, engineering, and manufacturing facility is located in Houghton, Michigan.
- 3. On information and belief, Twintec USA is a North Carolina corporation having its principal place of business at 10616 Metromont Parkway, Suite 204, Charlotte, NC

- 28269. Alternatively, on information and belief, the address of Twintec USA's principal place of business is 19718 Zion Ave., Cornelius, NC 28031.
- 4. On information and belief, Topp & Screed is a Luxembourg corporation having its principal place of business at 9 Zone um Woeller, 4410 Soleuvre Sanem, Luxembourg.

#### **Jurisdiction and Venue**

- 5. This action arises under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35 of the United States Code §§ 1 *et seq*.
- 6. This Court has jurisdiction in this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).
- 7. On information and belief, jurisdiction and venue for this action are proper in the Western District of North Carolina.
- 8. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Twintec USA because it has purposefully availed itself of the rights and benefits of the laws of this State and this Judicial District. On information and belief, Twintec USA is organized and existing under the laws of North Carolina and resides in North Carolina. This Court also has personal jurisdiction over Twintec USA because it has done and is doing substantial business in this Judicial District, both generally and, on information and belief, with respect to the allegations in this Complaint, including Twintec USA's one or more acts of infringement in this Judicial District.
- 9. Venue is proper in this Judicial District under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b) and (c) and § 1400(b) at least because Twintec USA resides in this District.
- 10. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Topp & Screed because (i) such jurisdiction is proper under the long-arm statute of the state of North Carolina,

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 1–75.4(1)(d), and (ii) this Court exercising personal jurisdiction over Topp & Screed is consistent with the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

- 11. Additionally or alternatively, this Court has specific jurisdiction over Topp & Screed because (i) it has purposefully directed its activities at residents of this Judicial District, (ii) on information and belief, the allegations in this Complaint, including Topp & Screed's one or more acts of infringement, arise out of or relate to those activities, and (iii) this Court's assertion of personal jurisdiction over Topp & Screed in this Judicial District is reasonable and fair.
- 12. Additionally or alternatively, consistent with Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(k)(2), this Court has personal jurisdiction over Topp & Screed, because (i) this action arises under the patent laws of the United States, Title 35 of the United States Code §§ 1 *et seq*, (ii) Topp & Screed is not subject to jurisdiction in any state's courts of general jurisdiction, and (iii) this Court's exercise of jurisdiction over Topp & Screed comports with due process.
- 13. Venue is proper in this Judicial District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(3) at least because there is no district in which an action may otherwise be brought against Topp & Screed as provided in 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) and Topp & Screed is subject to this Court's personal jurisdiction with respect to the allegations in this Complaint, including Topp & Screed's one or more acts of infringement.

## **The Patent-in-Suit**

14. On October 18, 2011, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office duly and legally issued U.S. Patent No. 8,038,366 (the "'366 Patent") to Somero as owner by assignment thereof, for an invention entitled "Wheeled Concrete Screeding Device." A true and correct copy of the '366 Patent is attached hereto as **Exhibit A.** 

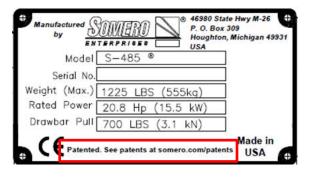
15. Somero is the owner, by valid assignment, of all right, title, and interest in and to the '366 Patent, including the right to seek remedies and relief for past infringement thereof.

#### **Background Facts**

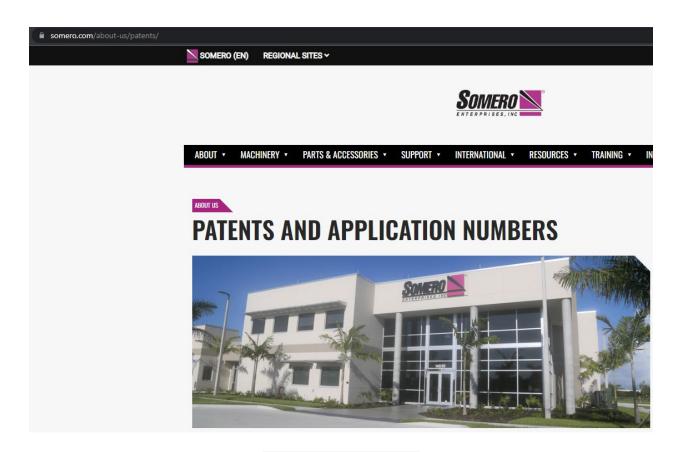
- 16. Beginning in 1986, Somero pioneered the design, development, manufacture, and use of laser-guided concrete screeding machines. Since then, Somero has led the market with continued innovation, growing its product offering from the single, original Laser Screed® to its current portfolio of 15 products.
- 17. Somero protects its investment in innovative and proprietary designs with a portfolio of 96 patents and pending patent applications. One of the patents in Somero's portfolio is the '366 Patent.
- 18. On information and belief, Topp & Screed designs, manufactures, and sells a variety of laser-guided and 3D GPS/ LPS-guided concrete screeds.
- 19. On information and belief, Topp & Screed designs, manufactures, offers for sale, and sells a laser-guided concrete screed which Topp & Screed markets and sells under the name "TS6100e."
- 20. On information and belief, a true and correct photograph of Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine is shown below:



21. Since at least December 2017, Somero has marked substantially all of its products that use the technology claimed in the '366 Patent in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 287. As one example, Somero has attached serial plates to its products that direct the public to a Somero Internet page on which the '366 Patent and certain Somero products are listed. An example of a plate attached to one such product is shown below:



22. The website listed on this plate (somero.com/patents) associates the '366 Patent with the Somero products that use the technology claimed, as shown below:



S-485/S-940

**United States** 

8,038,366

- 23. Somero has provided constructive notice to the public, including to Defendants, of the '366 Patent and Defendants' infringement thereof, at least since December 2017.

  Defendants have had constructive notice of the '366 Patent and their infringement thereof since at least that date.
- 24. Further, on January 13, 2023, counsel for Somero sent a letter ("January 13, 2023 Letter") to Topp & Screed, asserting that Somero is the assignee of the '366 Patent and accusing Topp & Screed of infringing the '366 Patent with the manufacture, use, offer for sale, sale and/or

distribution of Topp & Screed's TS6100e product. A true and correct copy of the January 13, 2023 Letter is attached hereto as **Exhibit B**.

- 25. On January 16, 2023, counsel for Somero received a letter ("January 16, 2023 Letter") from Topp & Screed, indicating that it had retained outside counsel to review the matter. A true and correct copy of the January 16, 2023 Letter is attached hereto as **Exhibit C**.
- 26. On information and belief, from January 23, 2023 to January 26, 2023, Topp & Screed, personally or through its agents, representatives, and/or Twintec USA, publicly exhibited the TS6100e machine at the World of Concrete tradeshow in Las Vegas, Nevada ("2023 World of Concrete Tradeshow").
- 27. On February 9, 2023, counsel for Somero sent a follow-up letter ("February 9, 2023 Letter") to Topp & Screed, asserting that Topp & Screed's public exhibition of the TS6100e machine at the 2023 World of Concrete Tradeshow constituted willful infringement, at least by way of the January 13, 2023 Letter. A true and correct copy of the February 9, 2023 Letter is attached hereto as **Exhibit D**.
- 28. On February 23, 2023, counsel for Somero received a letter ("February 23, 2023 Letter") from counsel for Topp & Screed, questioning the validity of the '366 Patent and requesting specific claims of the '366 Patent that Somero believes are infringed by the TS6100e and claim charts related to the same. A true and correct copy of the February 23, 2023 Letter is attached hereto as **Exhibit E**.
- 29. On March 8, 2023, counsel for Somero sent a letter ("March 8, 2023 Letter") to counsel for Topp & Screed, attaching a claim chart demonstrating Topp & Screed's infringement of at least claim 1 of the '366 Patent by its TS6100e machine. A true and correct copy of the March 8, 2023 Letter is attached hereto as **Exhibit F**.

- 30. In addition to constructive notice, Somero has also provided actual notice to Topp & Screed of the '366 Patent and of Topp & Screed's infringement thereof, at least by way of the January 13, 2023 Letter and the additional correspondence described above and attached hereto.
- 31. The filing and Notice of this action also provides actual notice to Defendants of the '366 Patent and their infringement thereof. Defendants have actual notice of the '366 Patent and their infringement thereof.
- 32. On information and belief, Twintec USA has used, offered for sale, sold, and/or imported, in and to the United States Topp & Screed machines, including the infringing TS6100e machine.
- 33. An actual and justiciable controversy exists between Somero and Defendants concerning whether Defendants' actions infringe the '366 Patent.

### **COUNT I – INFRINGEMENT OF THE '366 PATENT BY TOPP & SCREED**

- 34. Somero reasserts and incorporates the allegations contained in the paragraphs above.
- 35. Topp & Screed has directly infringed and is directly infringing the '366 Patent by making, using, offering for sale, selling, and/or importing, in and to the United States, its TS6100e machine. Upon information and belief, Topp & Screed has individually and jointly engaged in acts of direct infringement by itself and through agents in combination.
- 36. Based on publicly available information, the TS6100e infringes at least claim 1 of the '366 Patent. Somero may assert additional claims of the '366 Patent after a reasonable opportunity for investigation and discovery.
- 37. Topp & Screed's infringement is described further below with respect to claim 1. This chart demonstrates that Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine has each of the limitations in

claim 1 of the '366 Patent. The analysis below is preliminary in nature and based on publicly available information.

Somero 8,038,366 Patent	Topp & Screed TS6100e
1. A wheeled concrete screeding device for screeding uncured concrete, said wheeled	To the extent the preamble is limiting, the TS6100e is "a wheeled concrete screeding device for screeding uncured concrete,"
concrete screeding device comprising:	TOPP & SCREED UNVEILS WORLD FIRST BATTERY POWERED MINI SUPERFLAT SCREED
	Published on Dec 3, 2020 7:25:39 AM
	Topp & Screed is renowned for its global performance in the design, manufacture and maintenance of equipment for the production of concrete industrial floor slabs. Established in 2006 the company is located in Luxembourg, has an extensive range of equipment and is renowned for its continuous innovation and cutting-edge technology.  The latest addition to its product range is the TS6100e, fully electric, battery powered Mini Superflat Screed. The zero emissions, compact concrete levelling machine is ideal for industrial concrete floors, freezers, garages, parking areas, mezzanines and other construction jobs where space is limited and meets consumer demands for an environmentally sensitive machine.  https://www.twintecgroup.com/topp-screed-blog/topp-screed-unveils-world-first-battery-powered-mini-superflat-screed  https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=430765085368961

Somero 8,038,366 Patent	Topp & Screed TS6100e
	TS 6100e

a wheeled unit having at least two wheels for movably supporting a frame portion of said wheeled unit, said frame portion having a forward end and a rearward end, wherein said wheeled unit is movable through uncured concrete in a screeding direction;



The TS 6100e is "a wheeled unit having at least two wheels for movably supporting a frame portion of said wheeled unit, said frame portion having a forward end and a rearward end, wherein said wheeled unit is movable through uncured concrete in a screeding direction;"

a screed head supported at said rearward end of said frame portion and following behind said wheeled unit when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction, said screed head comprising a grade establishing element and a vibratable member;



The TS6100e has "a screed head supported at said rearward end of said frame portion and following behind said wheeled unit when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction, said screed head comprising a grade establishing element and a vibratable member;"

wherein said grade establishing element is generally vertically adjustable responsive to a signal from a laser receiver disposed at said screed head to establish a struckoff surface of the uncured concrete at a desired grade when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction; and



The TS6100e has "said grade establishing element is generally vertically adjustable responsive to a signal from a laser receiver disposed at said screed head to establish a struck-off surface of the uncured concrete at a desired grade when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction;"



https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/2281284/Topp%20and %20Screed/Product%20Sheet/TS%206100e%20%20Superflat% 20Screed%20EN.pdf? hstc=178553787.1ff78f732995143b559 4a416e995a2f9.1673444686095.1675966763527.167812609496 2.5& hssc=178553787.3.1678126094962& hsfp=901111203 &hsCtaTracking=68b4e0ca-e711-4b56-a0b7-1a91194091a6%7C0a286dba-3a3a-4bfc-9c30-83c0853515c6

wherein said vibratable member is adjustably attached at a rearward end of said grade establishing element and wherein said vibratable member at least partially floats behind said grade establishing element on the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete and is at least partially supported at the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete as said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction.



The TS6100e has "vibratable member is adjustably attached at a rearward end of said grade establishing element and wherein said vibratable member at least partially floats behind said grade establishing element on the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete and is at least partially supported at the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete as said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction."

- 38. As demonstrated at least by the above chart, Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine meets all of the limitations of claim 1 of the '366 Patent. Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine therefore infringes at least claim 1 of the '366 Patent.
- 39. Topp & Screed's acts are acts of infringement in violation of the United States patent laws, including, but not limited to, 35 U.S.C. § 271 *et seq*.
- 40. On information and belief, Topp & Screed has continued, including continuing after notice, with infringing use, making, offering for sale, and sales of infringing concrete laser screed machines, including its TS6100e machine.
- 41. Topp & Screed's aforesaid infringement has been and continues to be willful and deliberate and ongoing.

- 42. Somero has in the past been damaged and continues to suffer irreparable injury as a result of Topp & Screed's actions. Infringement of the '366 Patent by Topp & Screed will continue unless and until enjoined by this Court.
- 43. Somero has no adequate remedy at law, and is, therefore, entitled to a permanent injunction prohibiting further infringement by Topp & Screed.
- 44. Somero has been damaged by past activities of Topp & Screed and is entitled to damages for past infringement, including its lost profits or an amount not less than a reasonable royalty.

#### COUNT II – INFRINGEMENT OF THE '366 PATENT BY TWINTEC USA

- 45. Somero reasserts and incorporates the allegations contained in the paragraphs above.
- 46. Twintec USA has directly infringed and is directly infringing the '366 Patent by using, offering for sale, selling, and/or importing, in and to the United States, Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine. Upon information and belief, Twintec USA has individually and jointly engaged in acts of direct infringement by itself and through agents in combination.
- 47. Based on publicly available information, the TS6100e infringes at least claim 1 of the '366 Patent. Somero may assert additional claims of the '366 Patent after a reasonable opportunity for investigation and discovery.
- 48. Twintec USA's infringement is described further below with respect to claim 1. This chart demonstrates that Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine—which Twintec USA uses, offers for sale, sells, and/or imports, in and to the United States—has each of the limitations in claim 1 of the '366 Patent. The analysis below is preliminary in nature and based on publicly available information.

#### **Somero 8,038,366 Patent**

# Topp & Screed TS6100e

1. A wheeled concrete screeding device for screeding uncured concrete, said wheeled concrete screeding device comprising: To the extent the preamble is limiting, the TS6100e is "a wheeled concrete screeding device for screeding uncured concrete,"

# TOPP & SCREED UNVEILS WORLD FIRST BATTERY POWERED MINI SUPERFLAT SCREED

Published on Dec 3, 2020 7:25:39 AM



Topp & Screed is renowned for its global performance in the design, manufacture and maintenance of equipment for the production of concrete industrial floor slabs. Established in 2006 the company is located in Luxembourg, has an extensive range of equipment and is renowned for its continuous innovation and cutting-edge technology.

The latest addition to its product range is the TS6100e, fully electric, battery powered Mini Superflat Screed. The zero emissions, compact concrete levelling machine is ideal for industrial concrete floors, freezers, garages, parking areas, mezzanines and other construction jobs where space is limited and meets consumer demands for an environmentally sensitive machine.

https://www.twintecgroup.com/topp-screed-blog/topp-screed-unveils-world-first-battery-powered-mini-superflat-screed

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=430765085368961



#### **Somero 8,038,366 Patent**

# Topp & Screed TS6100e

a wheeled unit having at least two wheels for movably supporting a frame portion of said wheeled unit, said frame portion having a forward end and a rearward end, wherein said wheeled unit is movable through uncured concrete in a screeding direction;



The TS 6100e is "a wheeled unit having at least two wheels for movably supporting a frame portion of said wheeled unit, said frame portion having a forward end and a rearward end, wherein said wheeled unit is movable through uncured concrete in a screeding direction;"

a screed head supported at said rearward end of said frame portion and following behind said wheeled unit when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction, said screed head comprising a grade establishing element and a vibratable member;



The TS6100e has "a screed head supported at said rearward end of said frame portion and following behind said wheeled unit when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction, said screed head comprising a grade establishing element and a vibratable member;"

#### **Somero 8,038,366 Patent**

wherein said grade
establishing element is
generally vertically
adjustable responsive to a
signal from a laser receiver
disposed at said screed
head to establish a struckoff surface of the uncured
concrete at a desired grade
when said wheeled unit is
moved in said screeding
direction; and

## Topp & Screed TS6100e



The TS6100e has "said grade establishing element is generally vertically adjustable responsive to a signal from a laser receiver disposed at said screed head to establish a struck-off surface of the uncured concrete at a desired grade when said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction;"



https://f.hubspotusercontent30.net/hubfs/2281284/Topp%20and %20Screed/Product%20Sheet/TS%206100e%20%20Superflat% 20Screed%20EN.pdf? hstc=178553787.1ff78f732995143b559 4a416e995a2f9.1673444686095.1675966763527.167812609496 2.5& hssc=178553787.3.1678126094962& hsfp=901111203

Somero 8,038,366 Patent	Topp & Screed TS6100e
	<u>&amp;hsCtaTracking=68b4e0ca-e711-4b56-a0b7-</u> 1a91194091a6%7C0a286dba-3a3a-4bfc-9c30-83c0853515c6
wherein said vibratable member is adjustably attached at a rearward end of said grade establishing element and wherein said vibratable member at least partially floats behind said grade establishing element on the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete and is at least partially supported at the struck-off surface of	TS 6100e
the uncured concrete as said wheeled unit is moved	
in said screeding direction.	The TS6100e has "vibratable member is adjustably attached at a rearward end of said grade establishing element and wherein said vibratable member at least partially floats behind said grade establishing element on the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete and is at least partially supported at the struck-off surface of the uncured concrete as said wheeled unit is moved in said screeding direction."

- 49. As demonstrated at least by the above chart, Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine meets all of the limitations of claim 1 of the '366 Patent. Twintec USA's use, offer for sale, sale, and/or import, in and to the United States of Topp & Screed's TS6100e machine therefore infringes at least claim 1 of the '366 Patent.
- 50. Twintec USA's acts are acts of infringement in violation of the United States patent laws, including, but not limited to, 35 U.S.C. § 271 et seq.
- 51. Somero has in the past been damaged and continues to suffer irreparable injury as a result of Twintec USA's actions. Infringement of the '366 Patent by Twintec USA will continue unless and until enjoined by this Court.

52. Somero has no adequate remedy at law, and is, therefore, entitled to a permanent

injunction prohibiting further infringement by Twintec USA.

53. Somero has been damaged by past activities of Twintec USA and is entitled to

damages for past infringement, including its lost profits or an amount not less than a reasonable

royalty.

**Demand for Relief** 

WHEREFORE, Somero requests entry of judgment against Defendants as follows:

A. Finding Defendants liable for infringement of the '366 Patent;

B. Finding that Topp & Screed's infringement of the '366 Patent was willful;

C. Awarding Somero damages under 35 U.S.C. § 271 adequate to compensate for

Defendants' infringement and to address the willful nature of that infringement;

D. Permanently enjoining Defendants, together with any officers, agents, servants,

employees, and attorneys, and such other persons in active concert of participation with them,

who receive actual notice of the Order, from further infringement of the '366 Patent;

E. A declaration that this case is exceptional within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 285

and awarding Somero its reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements;

F. Awarding Somero interest on all damages awarded; and

G. Granting Somero all other relief to which it is entitled.

**Demand for Jury Trial** 

Somero demands trial by jury for all issues so triable.

Dated: April 26, 2023 Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Sarah Ashley Barnett

Sarah Sloan Batson

N.C. Bar No. 42066

MAYNARD NEXSEN PC

19

104 South Main Street, Suite 900

Greenville, SC 9601 Phone: (864) 370-2211 Fax: (864) 282-1177

sbatson@maynardnexsen.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff Somero Enterprises, Inc.

Sarah Ashley Barnett
N.C. Bar No. 52018
Seth L. Hudson
N.C. Bar No. 32259
MAYNARD NEXSEN PC
227 West Trade Street, Suite 1550
Charlotte, NC 28202
Phone: (704) 338-5307
Fax: (704) 805-4715
sbarnett@maynardnexsen.com

<u>shudson@maynardnexsen.com</u> *Attorneys for Plaintiff Somero Enterprises, Inc.* 

Leigh C. Taggart HONIGMAN LLP 39400 Woodward Avenue, Suite 101 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 Tel: 248-566-8300 ltaggart@honigman.com Pro Hac Vice Application Forthcoming

Sarah E. Waidelich HONIGMAN LLP 315 E. Eisenhower Parkway, Suite 100 Ann Arbor, MI 48108 Tel: 734-418-4200 <a href="mailto:swaidelich@honigman.com">swaidelich@honigman.com</a> Pro Hac Vice Application Forthcoming

David J. Thomas
HONIGMAN LLP
660 Woodward Avenue, Suite 2290
Detroit, MI 48226
Tel: 248-566-8642
<a href="mailto:dthomas@honigman.com">dthomas@honigman.com</a>
Pro Hac Vice Application Forthcoming